

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 192430

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ORIGIN EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01 PRS-01

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DRAFTED BY EA/ANP: MR MAGMICHAUD

APPROVED BY EA - MR MOSER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 192430

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NZ

SUBJECT: DEATH OF PRIME MINISTER KIRK

REF: WELLINGTON 2743

1. IN ORDER PROVIDE POSSIBLE US DELEGATION TO KIRK FUNERAL WITH LATEST INFORMATION, DEPT. URGENTLY REQUIRES UPDATES FROM EMBASSY ON ACTING PRIME MINISTER WATT AND NEAR FUTURE OUTLOOK FOR NEW ZEALAND POLITICS, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON FACTIONAL MANEUVERING WITHIN AND COHESIVENESS OF LABOR PARTY.

2. SPECIFICALLY, DEPT. NEEDS EMBASSY ESTIMATE OF WATT'S PROSPECTS FOR BECOMING PRIME MINISTER AS WELL AS RETAINING A MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIO SUCH AS FOREIGN AFFAIRS. IN THIS REGARD, WOULD APPRECIATE COMMENT ON EFFECTS OF RECENT DIVORCE PROCEEDINGS INVOLVING WATT AS CO-RESPONDENT. IS THIS LIKELY BECOME PUBLIC ISSUE AND OBSTACLE TO WATT'S ACCESSION TO PRIME MINISTERSHIP?

3. ADDITIONALLY, DEPT. REQUESTS EMBASSY ESTIMATE OF PROSPECTS FOR NEW ZEALAND POLITICS IN WAKE OF KIRK'S DEATH. WHAT IS THE LIKELIHOOD OF AN EARLY ELECTION? ARE LABOR'S PROSPECTS DIMMED BY KIRK'S PASSING? WOULD APPRECIATE ANALYSIS OF FACTIONS WITHIN LABOR PARTY, WITH SPECIAL

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PAGE 02 STATE 192430

EMPHASIS ON LEFT WING AND TRADE UNION INFLUENCES. CAN

LABOR MAINTAIN SUFFICIENT COHESIVENESS TO BE POLITICALLY
EFFECTIVE IN FACE OF OPPOSITION CHALLENGES?

4. DEPARTMENT REQUIRES EMBASSY REPORT BY NOON SUNDAY,
WASHINGTON TIME.

INGERSOLL

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NNN

Message Attributes

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